

# Unified Endeavor...

by Lt Colonel Stephen C. Tye and  
TSgt Edward Harvey

## Excellent Training for Comptrollers

Afred Thayer Mahan once said, Financial potency determines the issues of war. These words became a source of valuable inspiration to members of a small comptroller team engaged in a recent Unified Endeavor (UE) exercise.

UE exercises are sponsored by the United States Atlantic Command (USACOM) to train joint task force (JTF) commanders and staffs on JTF operations. They are carried out under a philosophy of joint operations in the purest form. Service members from all four components, Army, Navy, Marines, and the Air Force, plus representatives from several defense agencies, participate as a single force. This particular UE exercise also

had a combined flavor to it as it included a United Kingdom task force. It was held 16-26 September 1997 at the Joint Training, Analysis and Simulation Center (JTASC), located in Suffolk, Virginia.

How does a UE exercise work? Well, to begin, one needs an understanding of the basics. The basics in this case are phases, that is, UE exercises are divided into three phases. Phase I lasts about 5 days and entails the academic preparation for exercises in which joint doctrine and exercise guidance are presented and discussed. In this setting, senior officers and staff members from the JTF Headquarters are led in classroom discussion by CINCUSACOM and JTASC staff members.

Phase II follows about a month later and lasts about 7 days. The primary objectives of Phase II are for the JTF Headquarters to develop the operational orders (OPORDs) and produce the Time Phased Force Development Data (TPFDD). The JTF Headquarters comes together as a staff to develop the appendices to support the OPORDER. The JTF Comptroller is responsible for developing the financial management appendix and assisting in developing other annexes and appendices having a financial impact.

The concluding event, Phase III, lasts approximately another 7 days. OPORDs and appendices are put to the maximum test as war fighters are challenged with one scenario after another. While these scenarios obviously test the full gamut of war principles like command and control, and sustainability of forces, one objective drives the JTF above all others: WIN THE WAR!

Mission objectives require a solid supporting organizational structure to manage the never-ending list of tasks that pop up during a typical UE exercise. The JTF Headquarters is the hub of all this activity and is also where the comptroller role comes to life. To fully appreciate what goes on here, one must first know the JTF Headquarters is a multi-service function whose central mission is to accomplish multiple tasks in the most timely manner. Usually, these tasks are the result of a crisis somewhere in the world in which the Commander-in-Chief of that area forms a JTF to execute the tasks that will ultimately resolve the crisis. There are three levels in which the U.S. military operates: Tactical (unit level), Operational (JTF), and Strategic (involving CINCs, DoD, and the President). Since Unified Endeavor is a JTF exercise, participants work at the operational level.

Comptroller staffs for UE exercises typically consist of four billets: a comptroller (O-5), a budget officer (O-4), a finance officer (O-4), and a fiscal chief (E-6). In this particular UE, an Air Force technical sergeant with a military pay and disbursing background handled the fiscal chief duties. An Army major with a budget background handled both the budget officer and finance officer duties, while a Marine lieutenant colonel whose primary skills were also in the area of budgeting filled the comptroller job.

Throughout each UE phase the JTF comptroller staff was supported and guided by a JTASC observer/trainer (O/T). For this UE, an Army major assigned to the CINCUSACOM J-8 was the comptroller O/T.

Despite the small staff, comptroller responsibilities were just the opposite. They were, in fact, quite ambitious and covered a broad spectrum of critical mission support areas that included: provide mission essential funding in the most efficient manner to ensure operational success of the mission; reduce the impact of joint operations funding requirements on readiness; prevent funding shortfalls from compromising mission success; conduct detailed financial management planning; and coordinate efforts to provide and sustain resources in support of the logistics effort. More specific responsibilities included: serve as Financial Management Advisor to the Joint Force Commander (JFC); prepare the Financial Management Appendix to the JFC OPLAN/OPORDs; establish Joint Operational Area (JOA) financial management responsibilities; review estimated and actual costs of the operation; establish management controls to ensure the efficient use of resources; coordinate entitlement policy with the JFC J1 (Personnel); coordinate on logistical and contractual issues; coordinate with other staff members to identify requirements and support; determine sources of funding and obligation authority; account for the cost of allied support; and, coordinate with home station Finance unit(s) supporting the UE operation.

The best part of a Unified Endeavor exercise from a comptroller perspective is how it highlights the essentiality of comptroller skills in a war sustaining effort. UE emphasizes a comptroller's most critical responsibility of laying on the table the cost of conducting warfare. Interaction with the CINC and other JTF officials is vital to ensure war fighters have adequate resources and are using those resources in the best possible way to maximize mission performance.

A good tip for anyone facing an opportunity to participate in a future UE or other joint exercise is to review the comptroller functions outlined in Joint Pub 1-06, currently issued as a second draft for comments and pending publication. This publication provides a step-by-step process with examples and explanations of resource management and financial management operations in a joint environment.

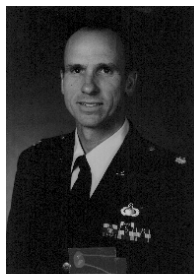
Participation in Unified Endeavor provided numerous positive results and a wealth of experience for those selected to participate. By the end of Phase III, the UE comptroller staff members were well acquainted with their roles and were ready to fulfill their duties on a JTF. They also gained a unique understanding of command relationships with their service counterparts. Their professional development increased significantly from exposure to operational and strategic levels of war as well as combined, joint task force operations.

In summary, Unified Endeavor is a great financial management experience. It provides a unique brand of training that can't be acquired anywhere else. Best of all, though, Unified Endeavor effectively prepares comptroller people for challenging JTF assignments.



## About the Authors

Editor's Note: At the time of this writing Lt Col Tye was assigned to HQ ACC, Langley AFB VA.



**L**ieutenant Colonel Stephen C. Tye is Chief, Finance Operations, HQ ACC, Langley AFB VA. He has a BS in Business Administration from Wright State University and an MBA in Business Management from Georgia College. Prior assignments include Commander, 5th Comptroller Squadron, Minot AFB ND; Comptroller, Keflavik NAS IC; Chief, Finance Division, HQ MAC; Chief, Accounting and Finance, Cannon AFB NM; Executive Officer, Support Group Europe, RAF Kemble UK; Deputy, Accounting and Finance Office, 2853 ABG, Robins AFB GA; and Budget Analyst, 2750 ABW, Wright-Patterson AFB OH. He is a member of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASMC.

**T**echnical Sergeant Edward Harvey is the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC), Military Pay and Disbursing, HQ ACC, Langley AFB VA. He is currently pursuing a degree in education and training from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Prior assignments include Military Pay Technician, 4th Comptroller Squadron, Seymour-Johnson AFB NC; Military Pay Technician, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB KO; Military Pay Specialist, 31st Comptroller Squadron, Homestead AFB FL; NCOIC, Travel Computation, 1st Comptroller Squadron, Langley AFB VA. He is a member of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASMC.

